



CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD

Meeting Minutes #708

February 8, 2008



Chairman Vernon Chong
Tom Moran, Member
Alice Astafan, Board Member

Jake I. Alarid, Board Member
Thomas Richards, Board Member
Edward Olson, Board Member

The California Veterans Board met at the Barstow Veterans Home in Barstow, California at 9:00 AM.

Undersecretary Roger Brautigan administered the Oath of Office to two newly appointed Board Members, Thomas Richards of San Diego, and Edward Olson, of Yountville.

ROLL CALL

Present: Vernon Chong, Chairman, Tom Moran, Member, Alice Astafan, Member, Thomas Richards, Member, Edward Olson, Member, Jake Alarid, Member
Chairman Chong presided.

Member Moran joined the meeting by teleconference and the connection was clear on both sides.

OPENING CEREMONIES

- A) INVOCATION**
- B) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

WELCOMING REMARKS/INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Chong welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the meeting. The Chairman then introduced the members of the Board and provided background on each Board member. He then introduced the Undersecretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs, Roger Brautigan.

Undersecretary Brautigan welcomed the group and introduced the staff, Deputy Secretary Veterans Services John King, Chief Legal Counsel Rob Wilson, Deputy Secretary of Homes Stan Oppgaard, Jerry Jones, West L.A.Home Administrator, Louis Koff, Barstow Assistant Hospital Administrator Anna Parker Daniels, Director of Nursing Jeanie Halliday, Supervisor Valerie Wilson, John Wahlstrom, and Monica Magana.

MINUTES

Executive Officer, Bonnie Kelly

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the minutes of the previous meeting held December 7, 2007. Board member Astafan moved to approve the December 7, 2007 minutes. Board member Richards seconded.
Motion unanimously approved and carried.

Minutes located at www.cdva.ca.gov/board

PUBLIC COMMENT

Steve Rosmarin

Mr. Jessie Morales addressed the Board on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Greater VA Healthcare System Voluntary Service.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Haun Appeal

Due to the request from Mr. Haun to elevate his hearing from a Review of Records to a Formal Review, this appeal will be re-scheduled when the Department reviews and issues a decision on the new items raised.

B. Resolution on Veterans Mandatory Healthcare Funding

The Chairman read the resolution signed by the Board in support of this initiative. Rusty Rustan updated the Board on the status and reported that they are currently seeking volunteers to solicit signatures for the petition.

C. 2007 Appeal Log

An updated Appeals Log was sent to the Board. The Chairman advised that there have been no appeals over the past fifteen months due to quick resolutions by the Department.

DEPARTMENT FORUM

A. Department Update

Undersecretary Brautigan gave an update on the construction of the three new homes and the hiring of new staff. Lancaster/Ventura will be completed by December 2008 and opening in April 2009; Los Angeles will be completed in December 2009 and opening in April 2010. There are currently over 300 applicants requesting residence at Lancaster/Ventura.

Mr. Opegard briefed the Board on the Homes:

At Chula Vista: A neuro virus outbreak occurred in early January and has now been contained. The interviews for a new Administrator are being held next week.

At Yountville: The Pathway Home Program currently has four residents, with two new ones arriving soon. The Memory Care Unit is being completed and a final survey from the VA is being finalized.

Mr. Opegard announced that a wireless internet program is being installed for Barstow and Chula Vista and will soon follow for Yountville.

A Task Force on Veterans Home Eligibility/GLAVC has been created by the Department, and they held their first meeting in January.

Mr. Wahlstrom reported on the budget situation and the required ten percent expense reduction by the Department.

1) PTSD Awareness/Suicide Prevention

John King updated the Board on efforts by the state and federal government to address

mental health issues of Veterans.

2) Barstow Rehabilitation Activity Department

Mr. Koff briefed the Board on the staffing status of the Rehabilitation Activity Department. Ms. Parker-Daniels gave an update on the Skilled Nursing Facility at Barstow which will be opening on April 2.

Significant Legal Matters

Rob Wilson reported that in 2003 the Department had 16 separate significant legal matters of litigation involving the Department. Since January 1, 2004 to the present, only three new matters have been added. One of which a jury verdict ruled in our favor, the second was dismissed by the plaintiff, at no cost to the Department, and the third is a new one.

NEW BUSINESS

A) Board Chair Election

Alice Astafan was elected as the new Chair of the Board with a term of two years. Tom Moran was elected as Vice Chair.
Chairman Chong passed the gavel to the new Chair, Alice Astafan.

B) Policy for Complaints to the Board

Chairman Chong presented policy A-15 to cover the handling of complaints received by the Board. A recommendation was made to revise the policy to read that the Department would have 10 business days to respond.

Member Moran moved to approve the policy with the suggested revision. Member Astafan moved to second the motion.
Motion moved and carried.

C) Resolution for Colin Shadell and Randy Bressette

The Board prepared resolutions to present to outgoing members, Shadell and Bressette to recognize their service on the Board. Due to their inability to attend, the resolutions will be presented at a future meeting.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

XI. COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

Member Alarid advised that he is involved with the Boots to Books in Los Angeles, where John King will be a keynote speaker.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 12:00 NOON